13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

824^x

3. Species which are believed to have medicinal [3], questionable medicinal, or magic virtues [4].

Doubtless all plant lore is on the wane, but the third class is the only one which presents serious difficulties with regard to obtaining information, at least as far as present day knowledge goes. This class of plant lore belongs now only to a few old men and women who regard such knowledge as their private property and are less willing to part with it, even for money, than a zealous housewife with her grandmother's cooking recipes.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

114
122

The authors have assembled the following notes on the uses of certain plants by the Island Caribs of Dominica following independent investigations in the fields of botany and ethnography.

Intensive botanical studies in Dominica were initiated by the senior author in 1937. The following year, aided by a grant from the Gray Herbarium, and again in 1940, as a Parker Fellow of Harvard University, he made return visits to continue this work. During the period of this field work brief visits to the Carib Reserve were made during which the majority of plants on which this publication is based were collected. A number of additional specimens of Carib economic plants also have been collected and forwarded from Dominica by the junior author.

Research by the junior author began in Dominica in 1930 and since 1938 the island has been his home. Visits to the Carib Reserve have been frequent, and the results of some of his ethnographical studies appear as citations in the bibliography of this work (52 - 63).

128 •

In this contribution the International Rules governing botanical nomenclature have been followed. Certain binomials which have appeared in basic West Indian floras are no longer accepted by botanists as valid names. These have been included in synonomy. The plant families follow the arrangement

---

278

[3] Many of these are still used and so are enumerated in the pages that follow, but some apparently have been long forgotten. Among the latter is one given by DuTertre (15) under the Carib name, *ribéliai*. Breton (7) describes it as « a real reed (jonc) » whose needle-thin roots thicken at intervals like the big beads of a rosary. One of these, when crushed, will bring about a « painless accouchement... more than one would injure the child ». *Ribéliai* sounds as though it has some of the botanical characteristics of an *Hippobroma* but the authors know of no plant like it from Dominica. However, Breton also calls *Isolepis cernua* a « jonc » so it is difficult to know what kind of plant to look for.

[4] The rarer the plant the more marvelous are its properties as a charm among the Island Caribs. In fact certain species like the *serette de montagne* are so rare that they appear to exist only in legend.

787

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

used in the ENGLER and PRANTL system (16), but the genera and species are listed alphabetically.

When available, the vernacular names are cited in three languages, English, Creole patois, and Carib. The English names represent those commonly used in neighboring British islands of the West Indies, and in cases they may have some usage in Dominica. The spoken language of the majority of the inhabitants of Dominica is an unwritten French «Creole» or «patois» whose vocabulary is 90 % of French ancestry with a syntax largely of African form. Patois names, therefore, form the bulk of the vernacular appelations used in the island. Although some Creole names of Dominica have been found to be identical with those applied to the same species in the French Antilles, many exceptions exist and it is not at all safe to infer that because the vernacular name in Guadeloupe or Martinique applies to one species it necessarily has to apply to the identical one when it occurs in Dominica. Indeed there are instances in Dominica where a single patois name is applied to widely different species (*e.g.* bois chandelle, bois tan, larali, mang'-rouge, mibi, savonette, and the like).

Some of the patois names (*e. g.* cachibou, cacounier, courbari, kalabouli, yanga, etc.) stem from Carib or Arawak names. But aboriginal names are comparatively few for no longer is the Carib language spoken, its use having passed out with the last generation. The Indian names [1] included in this work have been obtained from various sources, but chiefly from older Carib informants and certain early authors (7) (41) (42). In a number of cases two aboriginal names are listed. This reflects the bilingual structure of a tongue composed of both Carib (men's) and Arawak (women's) idioms. In such instances in the text, names used by the men are indicated by the symbol (m), while those used by the women are followed by the symbol (w).

In the discussion of the individual economic plants the majority of patois names are written in French orthography while the spelling of Carib words is phonematic.

Two parts of this paper, «Historical Notes» and the «Index to Carib Names of Plants», were revised just before this contribution went to the editor. While every reasonable care has been taken to bring the text in line with changes made, readers are requested to overlook any apparent inconsistencies in the spelling of native names.

Geographical ranges of the plant species are given in order to give a possible clue as to the origin of the species. This is especially important in an archipelago like the Lesser Antilles which is considered to possess a biota of waif origin. These geographical data have been compiled from West Indian floras (8) (18) (64) (67), as well as from specimens in the collections of the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University. The altitudinal distribution in Dominica of the various species is indicated by three approximate phrases: lower elevations (sea level to 1500 feet), middle elevations (1500-2500 feet), and higher elevations (2500 feet and above).

Specimen citations of the plants used by the Island Caribs have been included at the end of the discussion of each species. Collection numbers followed by the symbol (T) indicate herbarium specimens made by Douglas TAYLOR; all others are from the collections of Walter H. and Barbara T.

[1] All aboriginal (Carib or Arawak) names used in this paper are italicised.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

HODGE. These voucher specimens of the plants used by the Dominica Caribs have been determined and deposited at the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University. Certain duplicates may also be found in the herbaria of the Bailey Hortorium, the New York Botanical Garden, the Smithsonian Institution, the University of Massachusetts, and the British Museum (N. H.). 128 ●

IV. CATALOGUE OF THE KNOWN ECONOMIC PLANTS OF THE DOMINICA CARIBS

824[1]

CYATHEACEAE. TREE-FERN FAMILY.

Cyathea arborea (Linnaeus) J. E. Smith, Mem. Acad. Turin 5.: 417. 1793.

Fougère, Tree-Fern. — *amámei*.

A common tree-fern of the West Indies, Mexico and Venezuela. In Dominica this beautiful species is a weed of open wet slopes at lower and middle elevations where it often forms extensive colonies on abandoned cultivations.

The woody caudex is dried by the Caribs and used as a tinder. [372] Since the wood is pesty it burns readily for long periods and so is used to carry fire from place to place. The spores are said to be used as a «charm», and are gathered by spreading a sheet beneath a fertile plant «on Midsummer Night». [784]

Specimen citation: 6, 7, 2444, 2880.

PANDANACEAE. SCREW-PINE FAMILY.

Pandanus utilis Bory, Voy. 2: 260. 1804.

Screw-Pine. — *bérabus* («ungual»!).

A native of Madagascar, sometimes cultivated in the West Indies. This species has become naturalized in several coastal areas (e. g. Mariget, Hatton Garden, etc.) of Dominica.

The septa of the leaves are prepared in the same way as latanier (*Coccothrinax martinicensis*), and are used by the Caribs for plaiting hats and baskets and occasionally as thatch for huts or shelters. [285] [342]

Specimen citation: No herbarium material collected.